

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING A LIBRARY SURVEY

Montana State Library–Library Development Division

Things to think about:

- What information do you want to gather? You can use a survey questionnaire to conduct a needs assessment, to evaluate patron satisfaction with your services, or both. You can also gather demographic information about your service population.
- Who do you want to hear from? Are you looking for feedback from your patrons, or do you want to hear from non-users too? That will determine how you design and distribute your survey.
- What will you do with the information you get from the survey? How will you evaluate and present your survey results – and to whom?
- Remember that patron surveys can be an effective tool for marketing library services. For example, a survey may inform community members about services they are not aware of.

Designing the survey:

- It's a good idea to include fixed response questions that use a Likert scale, for example:

When you visit the library, are you able to find what you are looking for?

☐ Always ☐ Frequently ☐ Sometimes ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

- A Likert scale lends itself to use in a matrix, as in survey sample #3 (see below)
- It's a good idea to include an open-ended question or two in your survey.
- It's also a good idea to limit your written questionnaire to one or both sides of a single page.
- You can create an online survey using a tool like Survey Monkey:
<http://surveymonkey.com/>
- For more ideas on how to design your survey, check out some sample surveys from Montana libraries:
<http://msl.mt.gov/ldd/Samples/Surveys/Samplelibrarysurveys.html>

How will you distribute the survey?

- You can mail a survey questionnaire to the community at large, or to a random sample of registered patrons or community members. Consider the cost of postage for a mailed survey. How will the surveys be returned to the library?
- You can place written questionnaires, pencils and boxes for deposit of completed questionnaires in various locations around town. Using this method, you will probably hear from your library users and non-users, too. Make an attractive display for the questionnaires and you will be marketing your library at the same time.
- Put surveys as inserts in power bills, newspaper advertising supplements, checked out books, or any other vehicles of dissemination you can think of.
- Provide questionnaires for your patrons to complete during their visits to the library, or post your online survey on the library Web page.
- To insure a higher rate of return, provide incentives for return of surveys, such as having returned surveys entered into a drawing for prizes or giving out library promotional items in exchange for returned surveys.

Create your own survey or adapt an existing survey:

These sample surveys are provided for your use, including:

- Sample #1 – a general, single-question survey for library patrons
- Sample #2 – a single-question survey for library patrons
- Sample #3 – a patron satisfaction survey that uses fixed response questions, a Likert scale matrix, and an open-ended question
- Sample #4 – a user satisfaction and needs assessment survey that uses fixed response questions, check boxes, open-ended questions, and demographic questions

LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY
(Sample #1 - single question survey -insert your library name here)

Please answer the following question and return your response to the library. Your responses will be used in evaluation and planning for library services. Thanks a lot!

Would you recommend the library to a friend?

- If yes, why?

- If no, why?

LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY

(Sample #1 - single question survey - insert your library name here)

Please answer the following question and return your response to the library. Your responses will be used in evaluation and planning for library services. Thanks a lot!

If there is one thing you could change about the library, what would it be?

LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY
(Sample#3–insert your library name here)

Please select the answers that best represent your opinion. Any additional comments you can provide will help us improve our services. Thank you for your input.

1. When you visit the library, are you able to find what you are looking for?

☐ Always ☐ Frequently ☐ Sometimes ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

2. How satisfied are you with the overall services of the library?

☐ Extremely ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Very ☐ Not at all

3. How helpful is our staff?

☐ Extremely ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Very ☐ Not at all

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following services provided by the library:

Service	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Collection (books, magazines, audios, DVD's, etc)					
Reference Service					
Hours open					
Interlibrary Loan					
Public Access Computers					
Children's and Adult Programs					
Electronic Resources (databases)					

5. Are there any other comments you would like to provide concerning the library, its staff, services and/or programs?

Thanks for completing the library survey!

LIBRARY SURVEY
(Sample#4—insert your library name here)

Please answer the following questions. Any additional comments you can provide will help us improve our services. Thank you for your input.

1. Do you have a library card issued by this library?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Why would you like to visit the library? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check out Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Newspapers or Magazines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check out CDs | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Photocopier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check out Audio Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Public Meeting Room |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check out Movies | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study/ Research | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Adult Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Public Access Computers | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Children's Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Electronic Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a Class |

3. Are there any other services you would like the library to provide?

4. How useful do you find our electronic resources (website, databases, etc.)?

☐ Extremely ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not very ☐ Not at all

5. How do you find out about the library's programs and services? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> In-Library flyers and signs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Broadcast Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/Neighbors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

6. If there is one thing that you could change about the library, what would it be?

7. OPTIONAL: The following information will be used for demographic purposes only. Please provide information for the person completing the survey.

☐ Male ☐ Female

☐ Child (up to age 12) ☐ Teen (13 – 19) ☐ Adult (20 – 54) ☐ Senior (55+)

Thanks for completing the library survey!